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Goddard Earth Science Data Information
and Services Center (GES DISC)

README Document for

Orbiting Carbon Observatory Products

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1 Introduction

This README file applies to the Version 5 data products from the Orbiting Carbon Observatory (OCO) and contains basic information regarding the OCO products. More extensive documentation (including all documents referenced in this README) is available from the [OCO documentation page](#) at the Goddard Earth Sciences Data and Information Services Center (GES DISC).

Brief overview of OCO-2 mission, retrieval concept, description of the content of the current and planned for public distribution OCO-2 data products, naming conventions, key data fields recommendations for data analysis, and tools to view and search the data products are provided in the [User Guide](#).

OCO-2 employs a dedicated spacecraft with a single instrument. It was launched on July 2, 2014, into a near-polar orbit on an expendable launch vehicle. OCO-2 joined the A-Train formation of satellites on August 3, 2014. The OCO-2 instrument incorporates three high-resolution spectrometers that make coincident measurements of reflected sunlight in the near-infrared CO₂ near 1.61 and 2.06 μm, and in molecular oxygen (O₂) A-Band at 0.76 μm.

Concerning the spectral domain, high spectral resolving power ($\lambda/\delta\lambda > 20,000$) is needed to resolve the CO₂ and O₂ lines from the adjacent continuum to maximize the sensitivity to small (< 0.3%) variations in total column CO₂.

In the spatial domain, the OCO-2 instrument have a narrow swath - it collects 8 soundings over its 0.8-degree wide swath every 0.333 seconds, yielding surface footprints with along-track dimensions < 2.25 km and cross-track dimensions that vary from 0.1 to 1.3 km at nadir.

1.1 Dataset Description

The full suite of OCO-2 products is given in Table 1. Attitude and Ephemeris, and Level 1 data are scheduled for public release by the end of 2014, and Level 2 retrievals by the end of March, 2015.

Table 1

Product	Long Name	Level
OCO2_Att	OCO-2 spacecraft attitude data	0
OCO2_Eph	OCO-2 spacecraft ephemerides	0
OCO2_L1aIn_Sample	Collated, parsed, OCO-2 Science or Calibration Data	1A
OCO2_L1aIn_Pixel	Collated, parsed, OCO-2 Calibration Data	1A
OCO2_L1B_Science	Calibrated, geolocated OCO-2 science spectra	1B
OCO2_L1B_Calibration	Calibrated, geolocated OCO-2 calibration spectra	1B
OCO2_L2_IMAPDOAS	Geolocated retrieved values of XCO ₂ and fluorescence generated by the IMAP-DOAS algorithm	2
OCO2_L2_Diagnostic	Geolocated XCO ₂ retrieval results plus algorithm diagnostic information	2
OCO2_L2_Standard	Geolocated XCO ₂ retrieval results	2

1.2 Algorithm Background

In preparation to use the final CO₂ retrievals from OCO-2, it would be most informative for users to read about the basics of the algorithm in the [User Guide](#). In addition, the OCO-2 Science Team has also provided documentation on the [Level 2 full physics retrieval](#).

For advanced users interested in working with the calibrated Level 1B spectra, for instance to test their own CO₂ retrievals, there exist several important documents:

- The [Level 1b Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document](#)
- The [companion L1B algorithm specification document](#)
- [Software Interface Specification for the L1B products](#)

These, as well as documents for the upcoming in March 2014 Level 2 products, [are organized on the GES DISC web site](#).

1.3 Data Disclaimer

The essence of the current state of the calibrated radiances, including radiometric noises, the A-band radiometric time dependence, the focal plane state, and the South Atlantic Anomaly impact on radiances, is provided in the brief [Quality Statement](#).

2 Data Organization

2.1 Three basic groups of OCO-2 data collections

Publicly available OCO-2 data are organized in Attitude and Ephemeris, Level 1, and Level 2 final retrieval of column CO₂ (see Table 1).

2.2 File Naming Convention

The file naming for OCO-2 products consists from the following elements that are described in Table 2.

oco2_[*ProductId*][*Mode*][*Orbit*][*ModeCounter*][*AcquisitionDate*][*ShortBuildId*][*ProductionDateTime*].h5

Table 2

Field	Description	Format	Selection
<i>ProductId</i>	A mnemonic indicating a file type.	String	L1bSc - Level 1B Science product
			L1bCl - Level 1B Calibration product
<i>Mode</i>	The acquisition Mode associated with the data.	Two character string	GL - Sample Glint
			ND - Sample Nadir
			TG - Sample Target
			DS - Sample Dark Calibration

Field	Description	Format	Selection
			LS - Sample Lamp Calibration
			SS - Sample Solar Calibration
			BS - Sample Limb Calibration
			NP - Single-Pixel Nadir
			GP - Single-Pixel Glint
			TP - Single-Pixel Target
			DP - Single-Pixel Dark Calibration
			LP - Single-Pixel Lamp Calibration
			SP - Single-Pixel Solar Calibration
			BP - Single-Pixel Limb Calibration
			XS - Sample Transition
			XP - Single-Pixel Transition
			MS - Sample Lunar Calibration
			MP - Single-Pixel Lunar Calibration
			SB - Stand-by
<i>Orbit</i>	The Orbit on which the associated data were acquired. If the Orbit number is less than 10,000, zeros are prepended to the number to ensure that the field is five digits long.	NNNNN	Actual Orbit number for data acquired du
<i>ModeCounter</i>	This field indicates how many times an acquisition Mode occurs in an Orbit. If a mode occurs only once, ModeCounter is set to "a".	Single character	a, b, c, ...
<i>AcquisitionDate</i>	The date (UTC) the data were acquired.	YYMMDD	

Field	Description	Format	Selection
<i>ShortBuildId</i>	The identification of the related software build	Bstuu	s = ID of major build cycle t = ID of scheduled build within a major build cycle uu = ID of incremental or patch build
<i>ProductionDateTime</i>	The date and time (UTC) that the file was produced.	yymmddhhmmss	

Examples:

oco2_Attde_02413_141214_B5000_141215232732.h5

oco2_Ephem_02413_141214_B5000_141215232732.h5

oco2_L1alnDS_02413a_141214_B5000_141215233629.h5

oco2_L1alnSB_02413a_141214_B5000_141215233629.h5

oco2_L1alnSB_02413b_141214_B5000_141215233629.h5

oco2_L1bClDS_02413a_141214_B5000_141216004409.h5

oco2_L1bScND_02412a_141214_B5000_141216030251.h5

2.3 File Format and Structure

All OCO-2 products from **Table 1** are in plain HDF5 format. The latter allows conspicuous grouping of datasets that are related by some criteria under folders. The latter can be easily viewed by means of the executable utility “h5dump” with option “-n”. Below, a liberally truncated sample is given:

h5dump -n oco2_L1bScND_02412a_141214_B5000_141216030251.h5

```
group  /Dimensions
group  /Dimensions/AncFile
.....
dataset /FootprintGeometry/footprint_latitude
.....
```

```
dataset /FrameConfiguration/color_slice_position_o2
.....
dataset /FrameTemperatures/temp_smooth_fpa_o2
.....
dataset /Metadata/AcquisitionMode
.....
dataset /SoundingGeometry/sounding_latitude
.....
group /SoundingMeasurements
dataset /SoundingMeasurements/radiance_o2
dataset /SoundingMeasurements/radiance_strong_co2
dataset /SoundingMeasurements/radiance_weak_co2
```

Full description of groups and datasets within groups can be found in the documentation of the corresponding data type.

2.4 Key Science Data Fields

There is a very large number of variables in every OCO-2 HDF5 file, and every data type would have its key data fields. For instance, in the calibrated L1B spectra (product mnemonic “L1bSc” in the file name) the key group of variables can be assumed to be “/SoundingMeasurements” (see above). For detailed description of each variable, users should refer to the corresponding [documentation](#).

2.5 Science Area

NASA successfully launched its first spacecraft dedicated to studying atmospheric carbon dioxide at 2:56 a.m. PDT (5:56 a.m. PDT) on Wednesday, July 2, 2014. Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 (OCO-2) is NASA’s first dedicated Earth remote sensing satellite to study atmospheric carbon dioxide from space. OCO-2 is an exploratory science mission designed to collect space-based global measurements of atmospheric CO₂ with the precision, resolution, and coverage needed to characterize sources and sinks (fluxes) on regional scales ($\geq 1000\text{km}$). OCO-2 will also be able to quantify CO₂ variability over the seasonal cycles year after year. This mission will also validate a space-based measurement approach and analysis concept that could be used for future systematic CO₂ monitoring missions.

3 Data Contents

3.1 Dimensions

Some sense of dimensions can be acquired from the group `/Dimensions`. Although all dimensions are described in that group, admittedly it is not an easy task to relate that dimensions with the data fields they belong to. Still, the value of this group is that each dimension is given a short description.

3.2 Attributes

All Metadata attributes in OCO-2 files are under the group `"/Metadata"`. It contains a large number of Metadata objects. The easiest way to print a filtered list is e.g.:

```
h5dump -n oco2_L1bScND_02412a_141214_B5000_141216030251.h5 |grep Metadata
```

An example of important object there is `"/Metadata/BuildId"`, that identifies the algorithm version used in the processing.

4 Options for Reading the Data

4.1 Command Line Utilities

The HDF Group lists a number of HDF5 command line tools on their [website](#):

http://www.hdfgroup.org/products/hdf5_tools/index.html#h5dist

Among them, the one that is the most useful for previewing HDF5 content is **h5dump**. It is the “must-have” utility for quick previews of the HDF5 files structure and contents. For instance use to print the algorithm version:

```
h5dump -d "/Metadata/BuildId" oco2_L1bScND_02412a_141214_B5000_141216030251.h5
```

4.2 Tools for simple visualization and file content view

It should be noted that OCO-2 is a sounder with a very narrow swath, as opposed to imagers like MODIS. Simple L1B swath images, while technically possible, will make little sense for superficial viewing. Just go give a flavor, in L1B swaths, every pixel contains 1016 spectral “colors”.

4.2.1 HDFView

Users involved with sensor data debugging and spectroscopy may find **HDFView** very useful. Among the strengths of the tool is that OCO-2 files content can be viewed in a very friendly fashion – all groups are presented as folders where user can easily drill down the file hierarchy.

Quick line plots, as cross sections in the spectral or spatial domain, are very easy to view.

Numerical data sets can be viewed as spreadsheets, and as images (multi-dimensional datasets). Simple data manipulations are also possible.

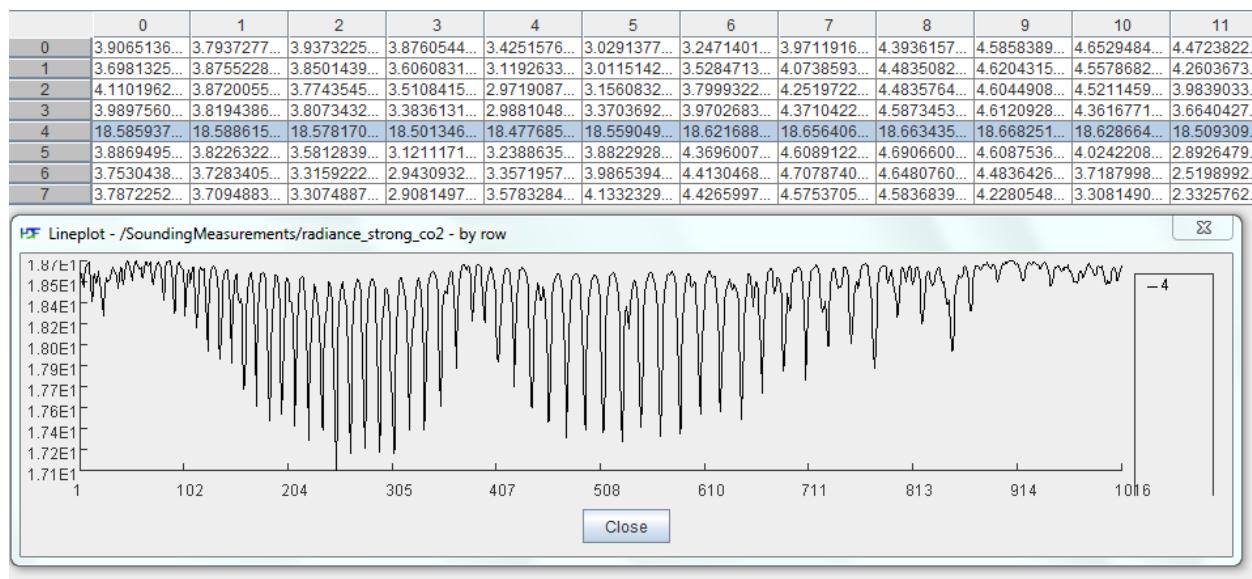


Figure 1. Screen snapshot of HDFView spreadsheet of the 8 OCO-2 footprints, and plot of OCO-2 strong CO₂ band (centered at 2.06 μm) spectrum from footprint 4 (log₁₀ is taken).

For download and more information, follow [this link](#):

<http://www.hdfgroup.org/hdf-java-html/hdfview/index.html>

4.2.2 Commercial

IDL and **MatLAB**, are two major commercial data languages, coming with their libraries that fully support all HDF formats.

Although created for the ACOS Task, the recipes listed at the GES DISC website will give some guidance on how to open and read HDF5 files, and even build some gridding code:

<http://disc.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/acdisc/documentation/acos-data-handling-recipes>

Since HDF5 files created under the ACOS Task (using GOSAT/TANSO-FTS radiances), and OCO-2, have very similar structure, the recipes are providing simple examples of basic HDF5 functions.

4.2.3 Science Team provided

More example recipes can be found in the [OCO-2 User Guide](#). These are more complex recipes using IDL and Python.

5 Data Services

5.1 Mirador

GES DISC provides basic temporal and advanced (event) searches through its search and download engine, **Mirador**:

<http://mirador.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

Mirador offers various download options that suit users with different preferences and different levels of technical abilities. Users can start from a point where they don't know anything about these particular data, its location, size, format, etc.., and quickly find what they need by just providing relevant keywords, like "OCO", or "CO2".

5.2 On-line access

Since all data are on-line, users can do global recursive downloads using anonymous ftp. The top ftp directory is:

ftp://oco2.gesdisc.eosdis.nasa.gov/data/s4pa/OCO2_DATA/

5.3 OPeNDAP

OPeNDAP stands for "Open-source Project for a Network Data Access Protocol". OPeNDAP is a framework that simplifies all aspects of scientific data networking. It provides simple means for parameter and spatial subset. In the case of OCO-2 Level 1 and 2 data, the simple spatial subset can be materialized by array indexes, not geographical coordinates. In the most simplistic case, OPeNDAP can be used to convert data from HDF5 to NetCDF3, ASCII, and plain binary. The data directory hierarchy, as served by OPeNDAP, can be viewed in any browser:

<http://oco2.gesdisc.eosdis.nasa.gov/opendap/>

In this case OPeNDAP will be convenient to preview file contents and in particular variables names, dimensions sizes, and quick print of reasonably small variables to the screen.

6 More Information

- Detailed Science Team documentation on all OCO-2 products can be found at:

<http://disc.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCO-2/documentation/oco-2>

- GES DISC is also summarizing essential information for every OCO-2 product in product pages that can be accessed from:

<http://disc.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCO-2/data-holdings/oco-2>

- All OCO-2 data types are also published to the Global Change Master Directory (GCMD). GCMD is a centralized depository of climate data information that is catalogued by popular keywords, which facilitate data discovery. Since the Directory is visited by a large number of people working on a broad range of research topics, it is an excellent forum to popularize data collections.

<http://gcmd.nasa.gov>

- OCO-2 Science Team at JPL is maintaining an excellent website, where the richest information, from the sensor/spacecraft operations, to science perspectives of CO₂ observations, is residing:

<http://oco.jpl.nasa.gov/>

For further assistance, please use this contact information:

Email: gsfc-help-disc@lists.nasa.gov

Voice: 301-614-5224

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8 References

Exhaustive list of references can be found in the [User Guide](#):